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WINNER OF 5 EISNER AWARDS

FABLES

49



WILLINGHAM
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LEIALOHA

SUGGESTED FOR MATURE READERS

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WOLVES

PART 2 OF 2

IN WHICH MOWGLI DOES HIS TARZAN BIT, MEETS YET MORE WOLVES, VISITS A CABIN IN THE WILD AND DISCOVERS SOMETHING SURPRISING THERE.

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I REACHED ALASKA IN THE MIDDLE OF THE SUMMER.

I'M *STILL* NOT SURE THIS IS A GOOD IDEA, MISTER...

I'M SORRY, I'VE SPACED YOUR NAME AGAIN.

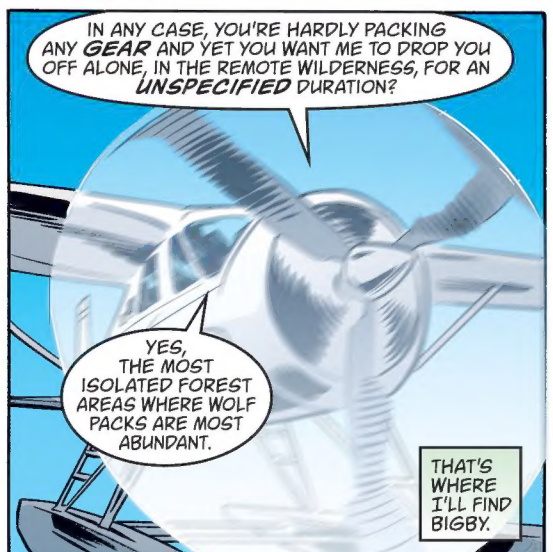


JAGATBEHARI.

RIGHT. JAGGERT-O-BEERY. IS THAT LIKE AN ARAB? YOU SORTA LOOK MIDDLE-EASTERN.

INDIAN, ACTUALLY. DOTS, NOT FEATHERS.

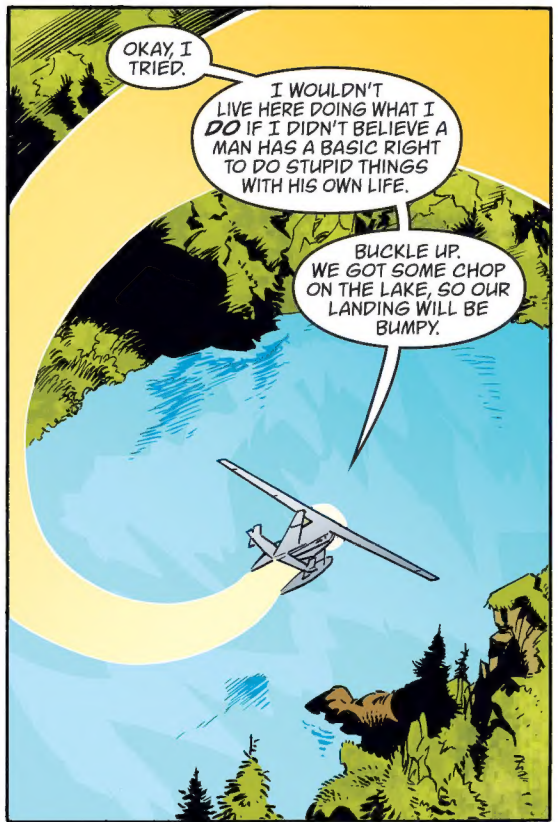
RIGHT, GOT IT.



IN ANY CASE, YOU'RE HARDLY PACKING ANY *GEAR* AND YET YOU WANT ME TO DROP YOU OFF ALONE, IN THE REMOTE WILDERNESS, FOR AN *UNSPECIFIED* DURATION?

YES, THE MOST ISOLATED FOREST AREAS WHERE WOLF PACKS ARE MOST ABUNDANT.

THAT'S WHERE I'LL FIND BIGBY.



I CACHE WHAT LITTLE GEAR I HAVE. I ONLY BROUGHT AS MUCH AS I DID TO KEEP THE NERVOUS BUSH PILOT FROM REFUSING TO TAKE ME OUT HERE ALTOGETHER.



IT'S SELDOM I GET THE CHANCE TO LIVE WILD IN THE FOREST AGAIN AS I DID IN MY YOUTH.



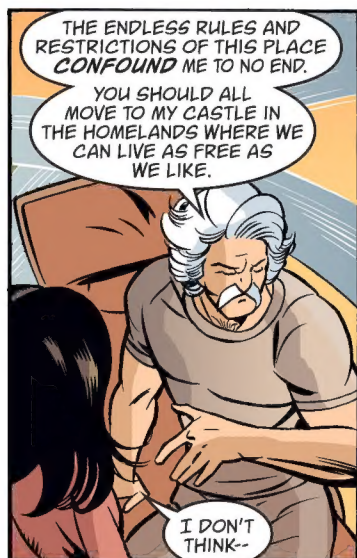
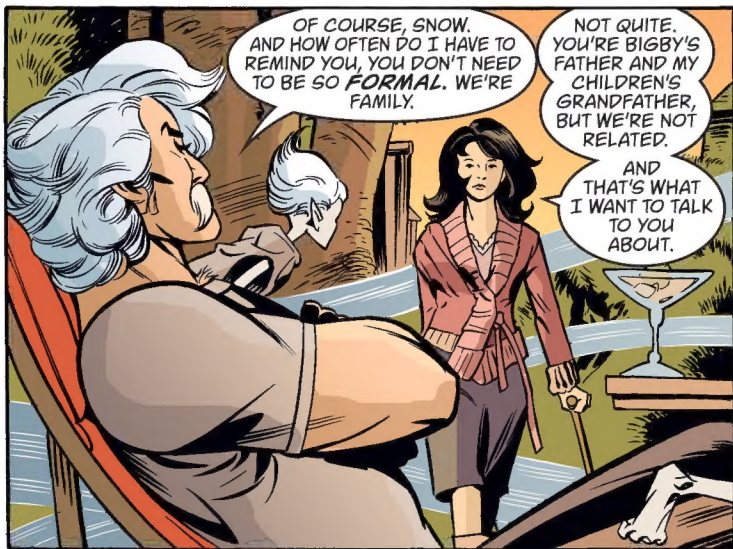
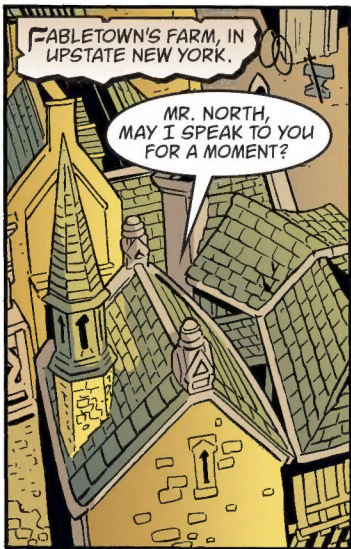
IT'S GLORIOUS.

I HUNT FOR MY SUPPER IN THE OLD WAY.

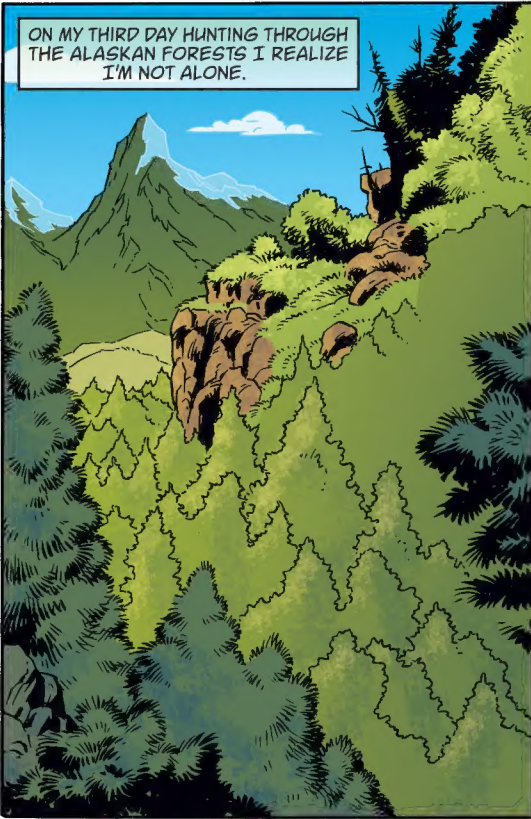


AND SLEEP UNDER THE GIANT TREES OF THIS UNTOUCHED WILDERNESS.





ON MY THIRD DAY HUNTING THROUGH THE ALASKAN FORESTS I REALIZE I'M NOT ALONE.



THEY FLANK ME ON ALL SIDES, KEEPING SILENT PACE WITH ME, JUST OUT OF SIGHT.



AND SUDDENLY I'M REMINDED THIS IS NO VACATION TRIP.

HO, BROTHERS, I AM MOWGLI OF THE SEEONEE WOLF PACK.



I'VE BEEN SEARCHING FOR YOU, IN HOPES YOU CAN HELP ME HUNT A--

SILENCE, MAN. YOU MAY SQUEAK AN APPROXIMATION OF OUR TONGUE, BUT YOU ARE NOT OF US.





SHOW ME MORE RESPECT, BROTHER WOLF!

OR I'LL HAVE TO EARN MY WAY INTO YOUR COMPANY IN THE STANDARD BLOODY WAY.



SILLY MAN. OUR LAWS DON'T APPLY TO OTHER CREATURES. NOTHING YOU CAN DO WILL MAKE YOU ONE OF US.

NOT TRUE, BROTHER. HE'S ABOUT TO JOIN EACH OF US--AS TASTY FOOD IN OUR BELLIES.

WELL SAID. THE PALE THING WILL INDEED BECOME A WOLF-- MANY WOLVES IN FACT-- FOR EXACTLY AS LONG AS IT TAKES US TO SHIT HIM OUT AGAIN.

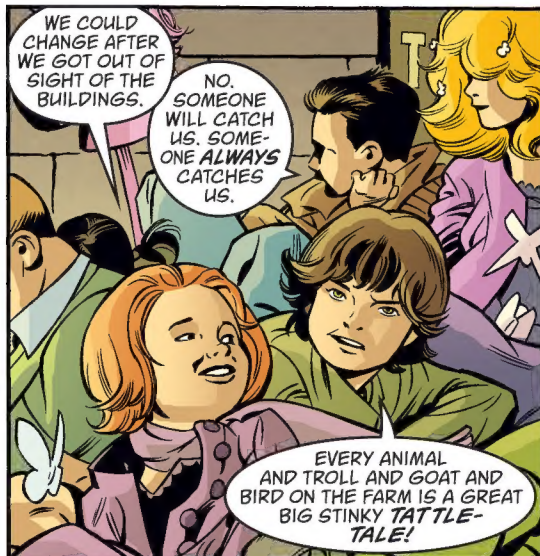
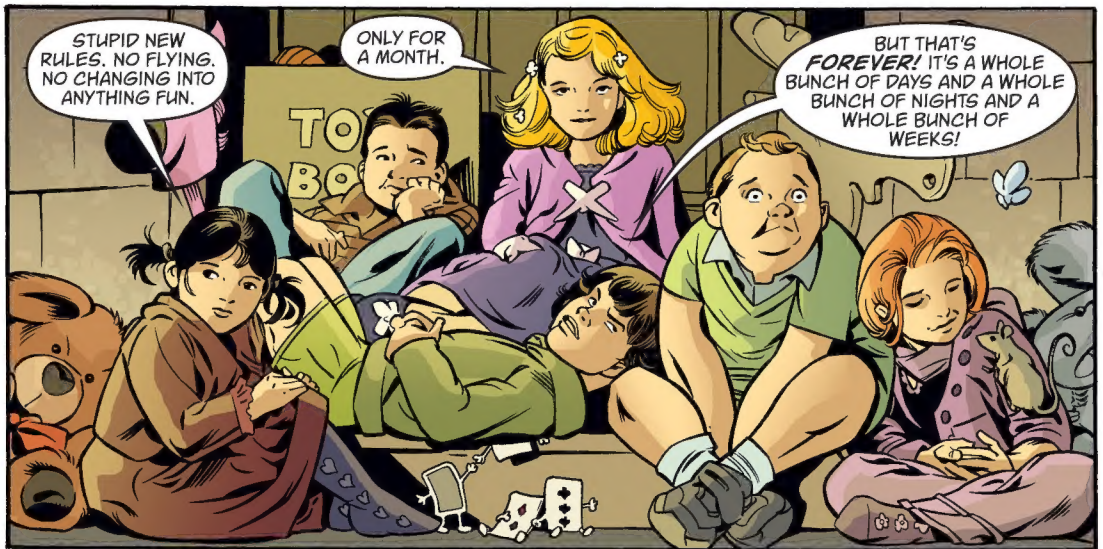
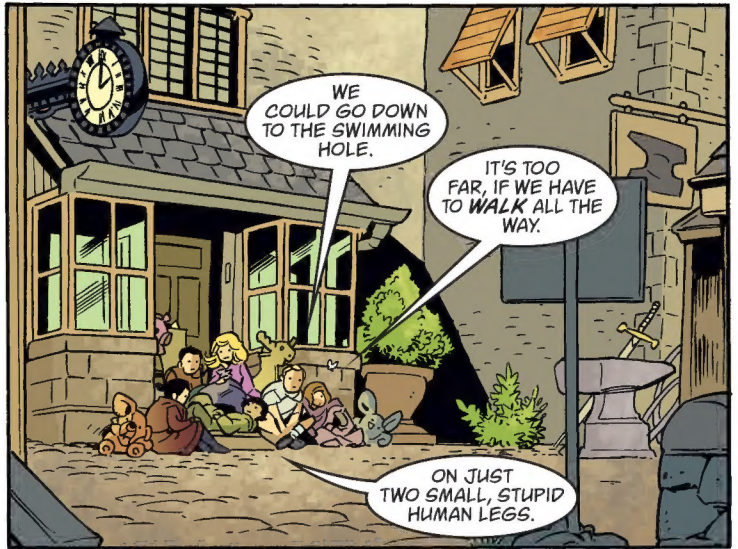


HOLD, BROTHERS. DON'T ATTACK THIS THING.

THE WINDS HAVE CHANGED.



MASTER WANTS THE MAN BROUGHT TO HIM.





FOR TWO DAYS THE PACK LEADS ME EVER DEEPER INTO THE WOODS, SETTING A BRISK PACE THAT TESTS MY ENDURANCE.

THE LEADER OF YOUR PACK TALKS TO YOU THROUGH THE WINDS?

NO, I AM THE PACK LEADER.

BUT THE GREAT LORD OF WOLVES COMMANDS EVERY PACK IN THIS VAST LAND--AS IS HIS RIGHT.



I'VE LET MYSELF GROW SOFT, LIVING TOO LONG AMONG MEN.

IT'S HE WHO SENDS THE WINDS TO SUMMON YOU.

I SEE.



EARLY THE NEXT MORNING WE CAME UPON THE CABIN, AS FAR OUT IN THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE AS ANYONE COULD HOPE FOR.

YOU HAVE TO GO ON ALONE FROM HERE, MOWGLI. WE'RE ALLOWED NO CLOSER THAN THIS TO THE DEN MADE OF DEAD TREES.

SURELY NOW THE GREAT AND TERRIBLE LORD WILL PUNISH YOU FOR PRETENDING KINSHIP TO WOLVES.

AFTER MORE THAN A YEAR OF SEARCHING,
FALSE LEADS AND PURPOSEFUL MISDIRECTION,
I SHOULDN'T GET MY HOPES UP.



BUT SOMETHING INSIDE
ME KNOWS MY QUEST IS
AT AN END.



I CAN SMELL HIM IN THIS PLACE.
EVEN IF HE ISN'T HERE NOW, HE'D
BEEN HERE RECENTLY AND OFTEN.

BIGBY?



OTHER STRONG SCENTS INFUSE THE CABIN
TOO--WHISKEY BEING THE MOST PREVALENT.

ANYONE
HOME?





I HEARD YOU, JUNGLE BOY.

HELL, I HEARD YOU FROM WAY UP ON THE RIDGE. I THOUGHT YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO BE *STEALTHY*.

BIGBY!

COME ON IN, MOWG. MAKE YOURSELF AT HOME.



SIT DOWN, KID. TAKE A LOAD OFF.

SO IS THIS A BUSINESS CALL, OR DID YOU JUST DROP BY TO BE *SOCIABLE*?

UHM...



I'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR YOU, BUT YOU LEFT A TOUGH TRAIL TO FOLLOW.

INTENTIONALLY. YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO GET THE HINT THAT I WANT TO BE LEFT ALONE.



WANT A SNORT TO TAKE THE EDGE OFF?

OR IF YOU'RE PARTICULAR ABOUT HOW YOU TAKE YOUR BOOZE, YOU CAN USE THE CUP AND I'LL DRINK FROM THE BOTTLE. NO DIFFERENCE TO ME.

NO, I'M FINE.



MORE FOR ME, THEN.

ISN'T IT A BIT TOO EARLY IN THE DAY?



NONSENSE. ANYTHING WORTH DOING IS WORTH OVERDOING.



NOW, DID YOU DROP BY SIMPLY TO QUESTION MY DRINKING HABITS, OR IS THERE SOMETHING ON YOUR MIND THAT'S ACTUALLY ANY OF YOUR DAMNED BUSINESS?

FABLETOWN NEEDS YOU BACK, BIGBY.



TOO BAD. I'M ALL DONE WITH THAT.

I HAD THE WOLVES LET YOU COME THROUGH BECAUSE IT'S PART OF YOUR JOB AS ONE OF THE TOURISTS TO CHECK UP ON FABLES LIVING OUTSIDE THE COMMUNITY.



BUT, AS YOU CAN SEE, I'M BREAKING NO RULES. SO NOW THAT YOU'VE HAD YOUR LOOK, YOU CAN BE ON YOUR WAY.

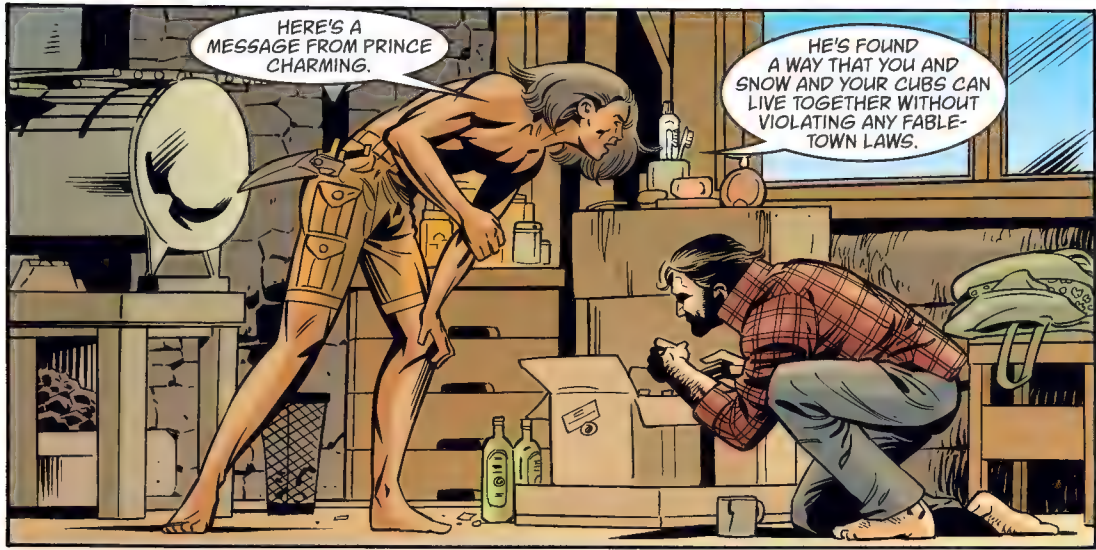
NOT YET.



FEELING SUICIDAL, BOY?

OF COURSE NOT. BUT I'M HONOR BOUND TO RESCUE MY BROTHER BAGHEERA

AND THE ONLY WAY TO DO THAT IS TO BRING YOU HOME.



HERE'S A MESSAGE FROM PRINCE CHARMING.

HE'S FOUND A WAY THAT YOU AND SNOW AND YOUR CUBS CAN LIVE TOGETHER WITHOUT VIOLATING ANY FABLE-TOWN LAWS.



HOW'S THAT POSSIBLE? I'M NOT ALLOWED--

UH-OH.



WHAT?

SOMEONE'S HOME EARLY FROM HER FAMILY VISIT.

MOWGLI, SAY HELLO TO MY CURRENT BETTER HALF.

LOOK, DEAR,
WE'VE GOT COMPANY.
SARAH TANARAQ, MEET
AN OLD FRIEND OF
MINE, UH...

VINCENT
JAGATBEHARI.

PLEASD
TO MEET YOU,
VINCENT.

I APOLOGIZE
IF I LOOK STARTLED,
BUT WE'VE NEVER HAD
GUESTS BEFORE.

AND I ALWAYS
ASSUMED WHEN SOMEONE
FINALLY CAME TO TAKE BIGBY
AWAY FROM ME, IT WOULD BE THE
WOMAN HE'S TRYING SO
HARD TO FORGET.



THE FARM...

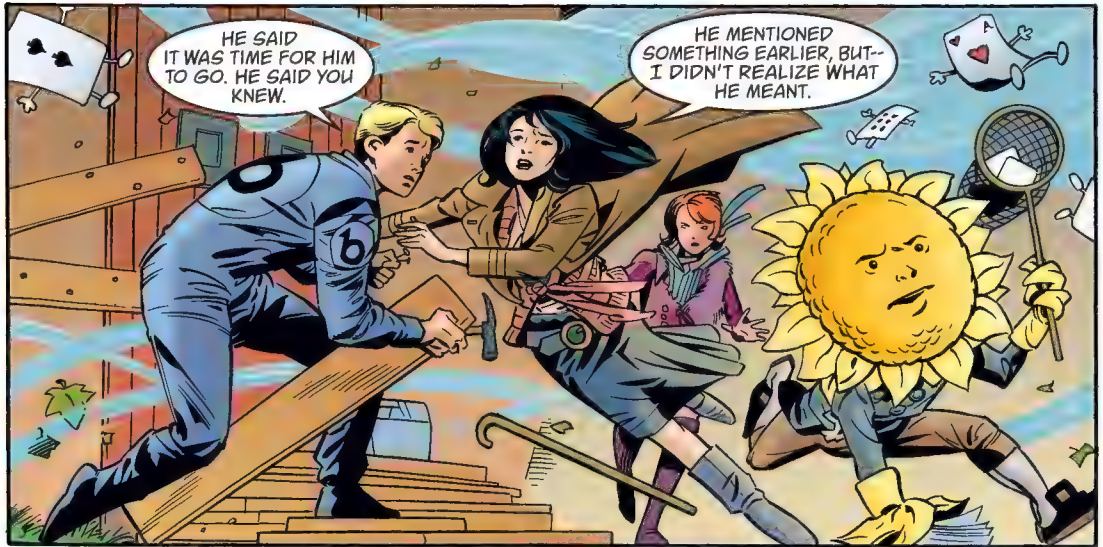
WHERE DID THIS WIND COME FROM?



IT HAPPENED AS SOON AS HE LEFT.

AS SOON AS WHO LEFT?

MR. NORTH, ALONG WITH HIS LITTLE WIND CREATURES.



HE SAID IT WAS TIME FOR HIM TO GO. HE SAID YOU KNEW.

HE MENTIONED SOMETHING EARLIER, BUT I DIDN'T REALIZE WHAT HE MEANT.

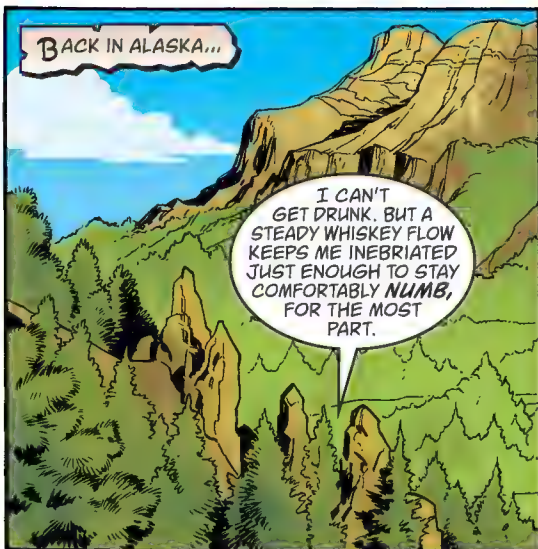


SIS? ARE YOU OKAY?

I'M JUST TRYING TO FIGURE OUT WHAT TO TELL THE CHILDREN. THEY *ADORE* THEIR GRANDFATHER.

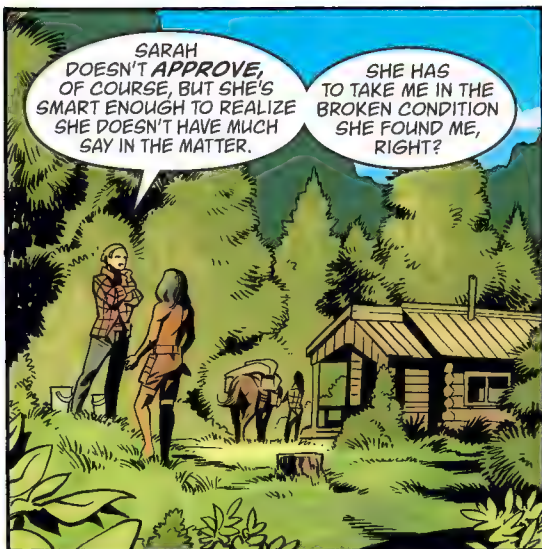


THEY CAN'T KEEP HAVING THE *MEN* IN THEIR LIVES RUN OUT ON THEM.



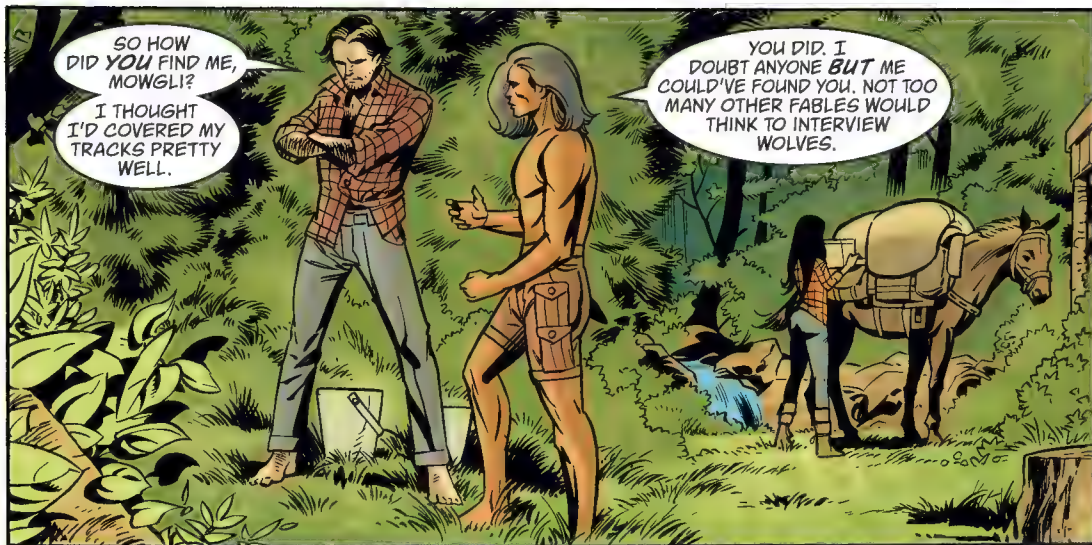
BACK IN ALASKA...

I CAN'T GET DRUNK, BUT A STEADY WHISKEY FLOW KEEPS ME INEBRIATED JUST ENOUGH TO STAY COMFORTABLY NUMB, FOR THE MOST PART.



SARAH DOESN'T APPROVE, OF COURSE, BUT SHE'S SMART ENOUGH TO REALIZE SHE DOESN'T HAVE MUCH SAY IN THE MATTER.

SHE HAS TO TAKE ME IN THE BROKEN CONDITION SHE FOUND ME, RIGHT?



SO HOW DID YOU FIND ME, MOWGLI?

I THOUGHT I'D COVERED MY TRACKS PRETTY WELL.

YOU DID. I DOUBT ANYONE BUT ME COULD'VE FOUND YOU. NOT TOO MANY OTHER FABLES WOULD THINK TO INTERVIEW WOLVES.



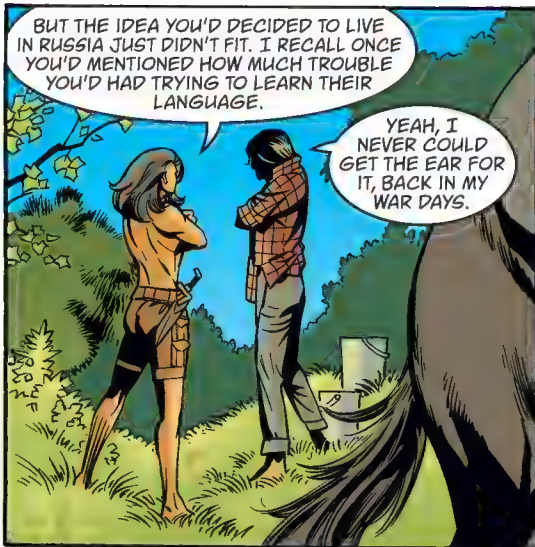
MUCH LESS HAVE THE ABILITY TO SPEAK TO THEM.

EVEN SO, YOU ALMOST LOST ME AT THE BERING STRAIT. I MADE DAMN SURE YOU DIDN'T HOP ANY PLANE OR BOAT.



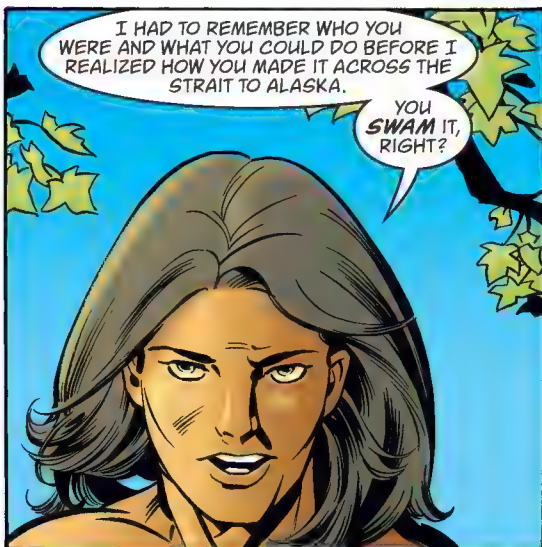
SO I NATURALLY ASSUMED YOU'D DOUBLED BACK INTO RUSSIA.

THAT'S WHAT ANYONE WHO'D GOTTEN THAT FAR WAS MEANT TO THINK. RUSSIA'S PRETTY BIG, WITH LOTS OF WILDERNESS TO GET LOST IN.



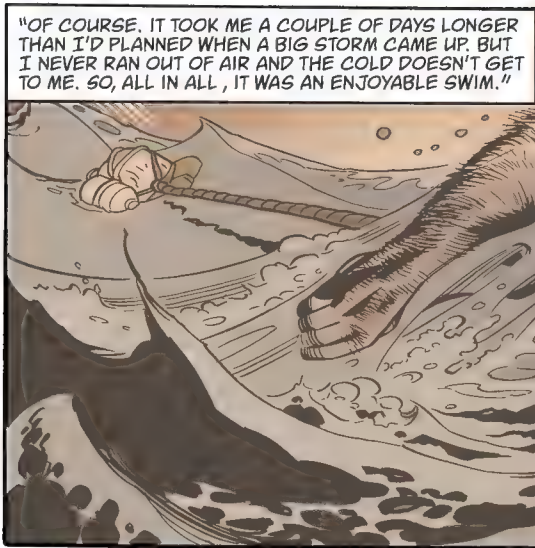
BUT THE IDEA YOU'D DECIDED TO LIVE IN RUSSIA JUST DIDN'T FIT. I RECALL ONCE YOU'D MENTIONED HOW MUCH TROUBLE YOU'D HAD TRYING TO LEARN THEIR LANGUAGE.

YEAH, I NEVER COULD GET THE EAR FOR IT, BACK IN MY WAR DAYS.



I HAD TO REMEMBER WHO YOU WERE AND WHAT YOU COULD DO BEFORE I REALIZED HOW YOU MADE IT ACROSS THE STRAIT TO ALASKA.

YOU SWAM IT, RIGHT?



"OF COURSE. IT TOOK ME A COUPLE OF DAYS LONGER THAN I'D PLANNED WHEN A BIG STORM CAME UP. BUT I NEVER RAN OUT OF AIR AND THE COLD DOESN'T GET TO ME. SO, ALL IN ALL, IT WAS AN ENJOYABLE SWIM."



I SHOULD'VE PAID YOU MORE, BACK WHEN I WAS RUNNING THE TOURISTS. YOU'RE TOO CLEVER BY HALF.

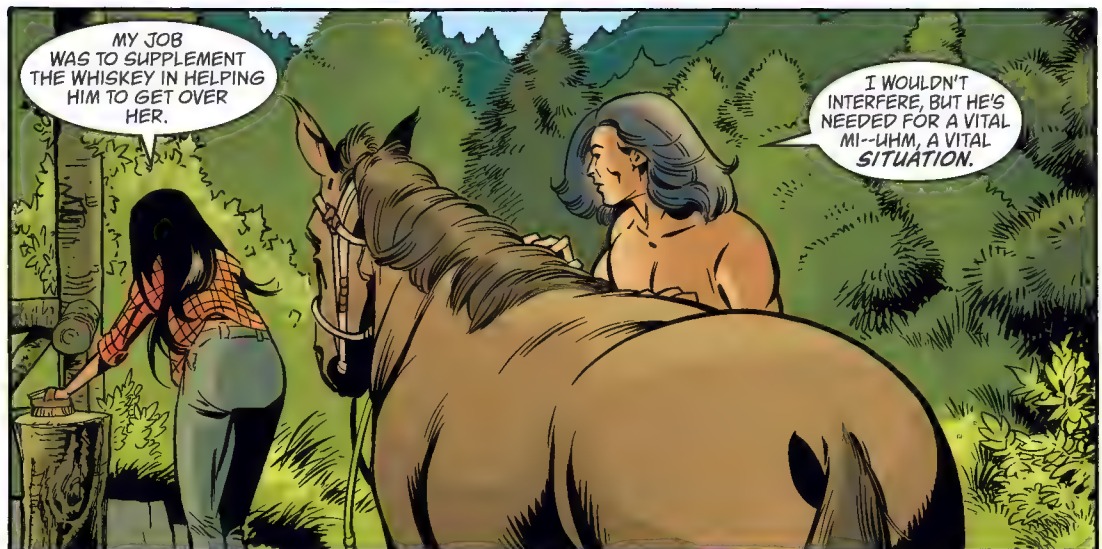
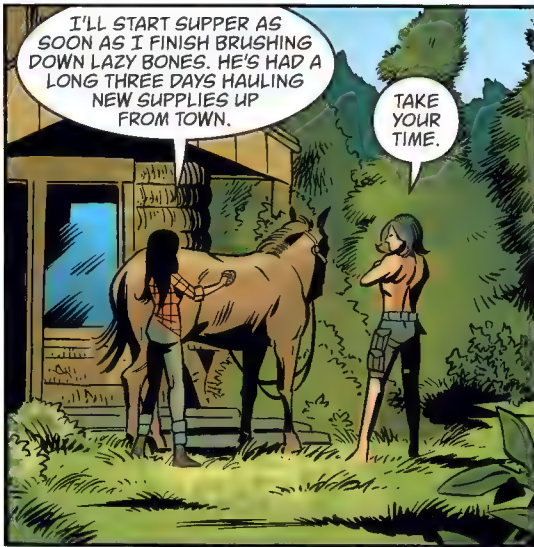
NOT TO CHANGE THE SUBJECT, BUT HOW MUCH DOES SARAH KNOW ABOUT YOU?

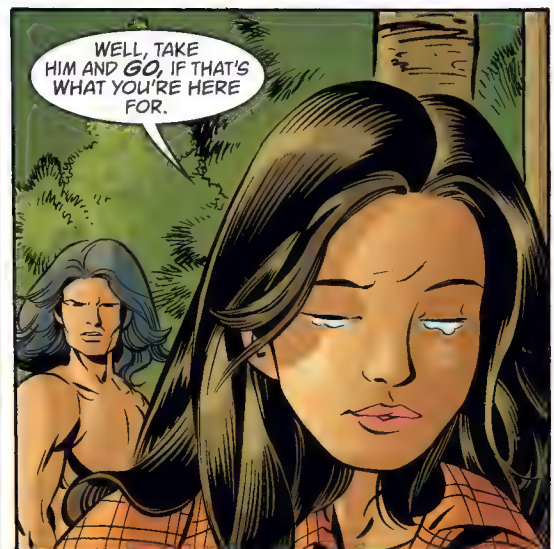
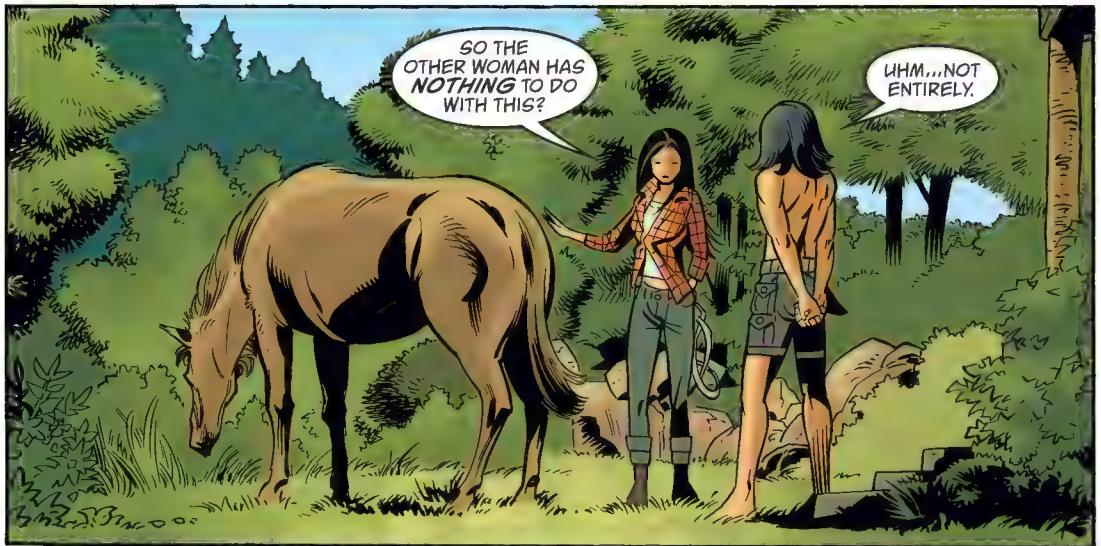
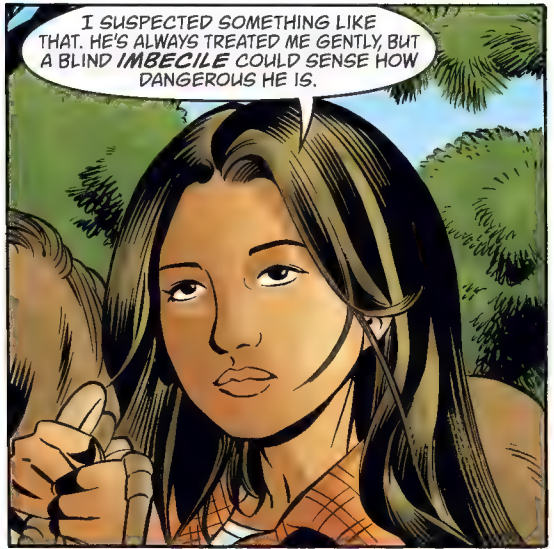


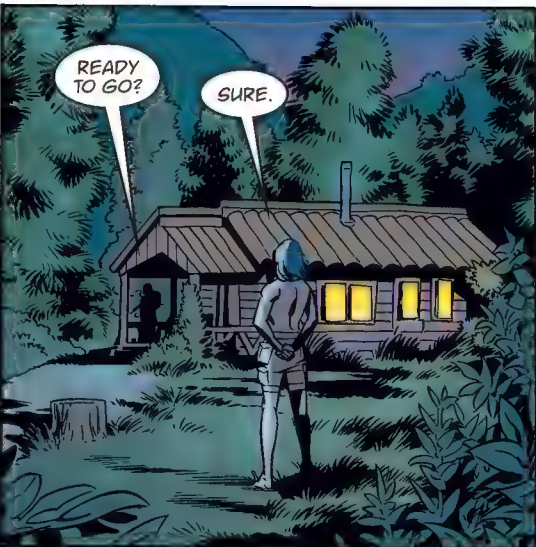
SHE KNOWS I HAVE CHILDREN WITH SOME OTHER WOMAN DOWN IN THE LOWER STATES, BUT NO OTHER DETAILS.

AND NOTHING ABOUT MY TRUE NATURE.





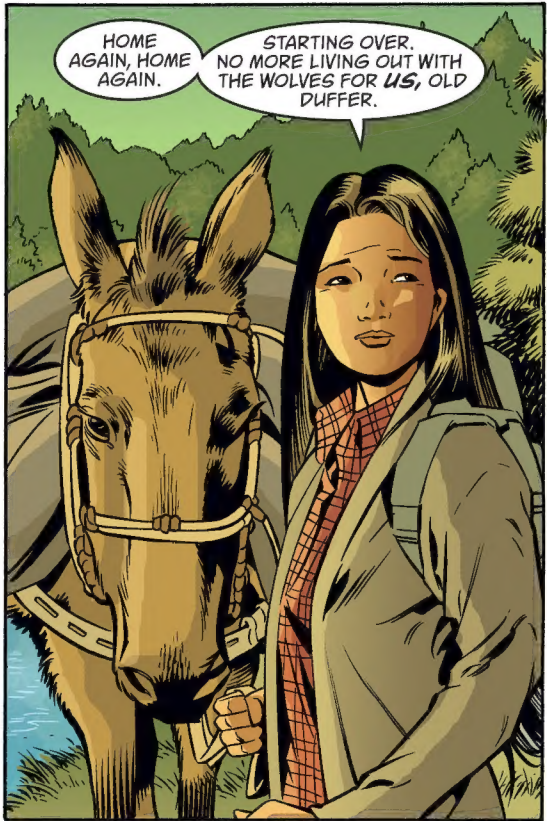






ABOUT A WEEK LATER...

HERE WE ARE, LAZY BONES.



HOME AGAIN, HOME AGAIN.

STARTING OVER. NO MORE LIVING OUT WITH THE WOLVES FOR US, OLD DUFFER.



AND AT A SMALL WOODCARVER'S HUT IN THE HOMELANDS...

WHAT IS IT, POP?

I'M NOT SURE.



YOU LOOK WORRIED.

I THOUGHT I HEARD SOMETHING, OR MAYBE--WELL, NEVER MIND.

PROBABLY JUST A CHANGE IN THE WINDS.



LATE AT NIGHT AT THE FARM...

HELLO? IS SOMEONE DOWN THERE?



THERE BETTER NOT BE ANY CUBS WHO SHOULD BE IN BED RAIDING THE ICEBOX.

NO, SNOW, IT'S JUST ME.



COLIN! WHY ARE YOU HERE AGAIN? IS THERE MORE TROUBLE COMING?

NO. AT LEAST I DON'T THINK SO.

THEN WHY--



IT'S HARD TO BE SURE, SNOW, BUT I THINK I'M HERE TO SAY GOODBYE. I DON'T THINK YOU NEED ME ANYMORE.

WHY? HOW?



IF I HAD TO GUESS, IT'S BECAUSE THINGS GET BETTER NOW--FOR YOU, I MEAN.

AND FOR ME, I THINK IT'S FINALLY TIME FOR ME TO MOVE ALONG TO WHATEVER HAPPENS NEXT.

NEXT: BETTER DAYS?

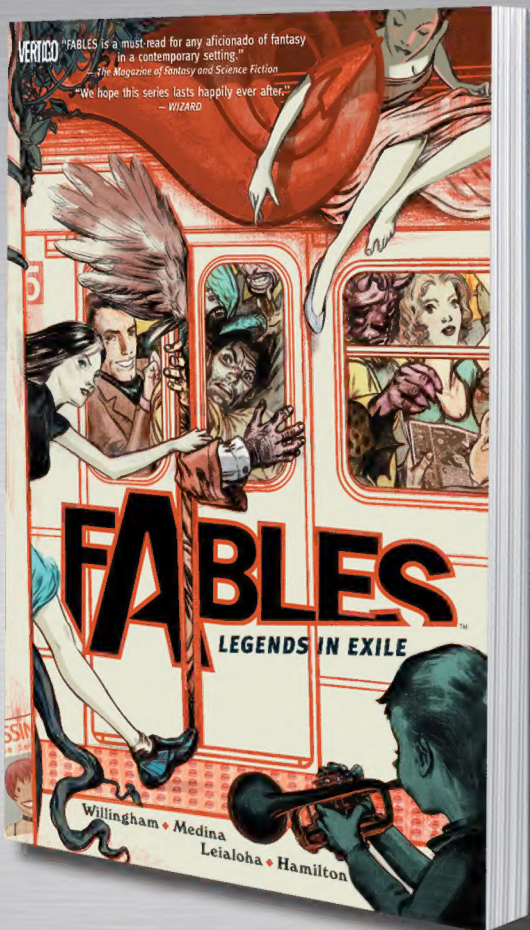
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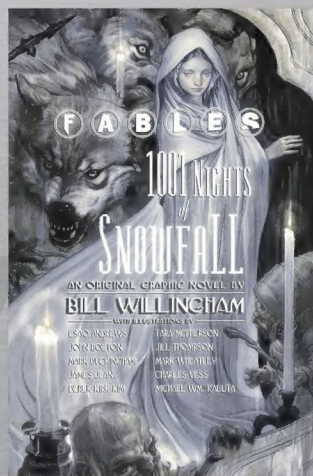
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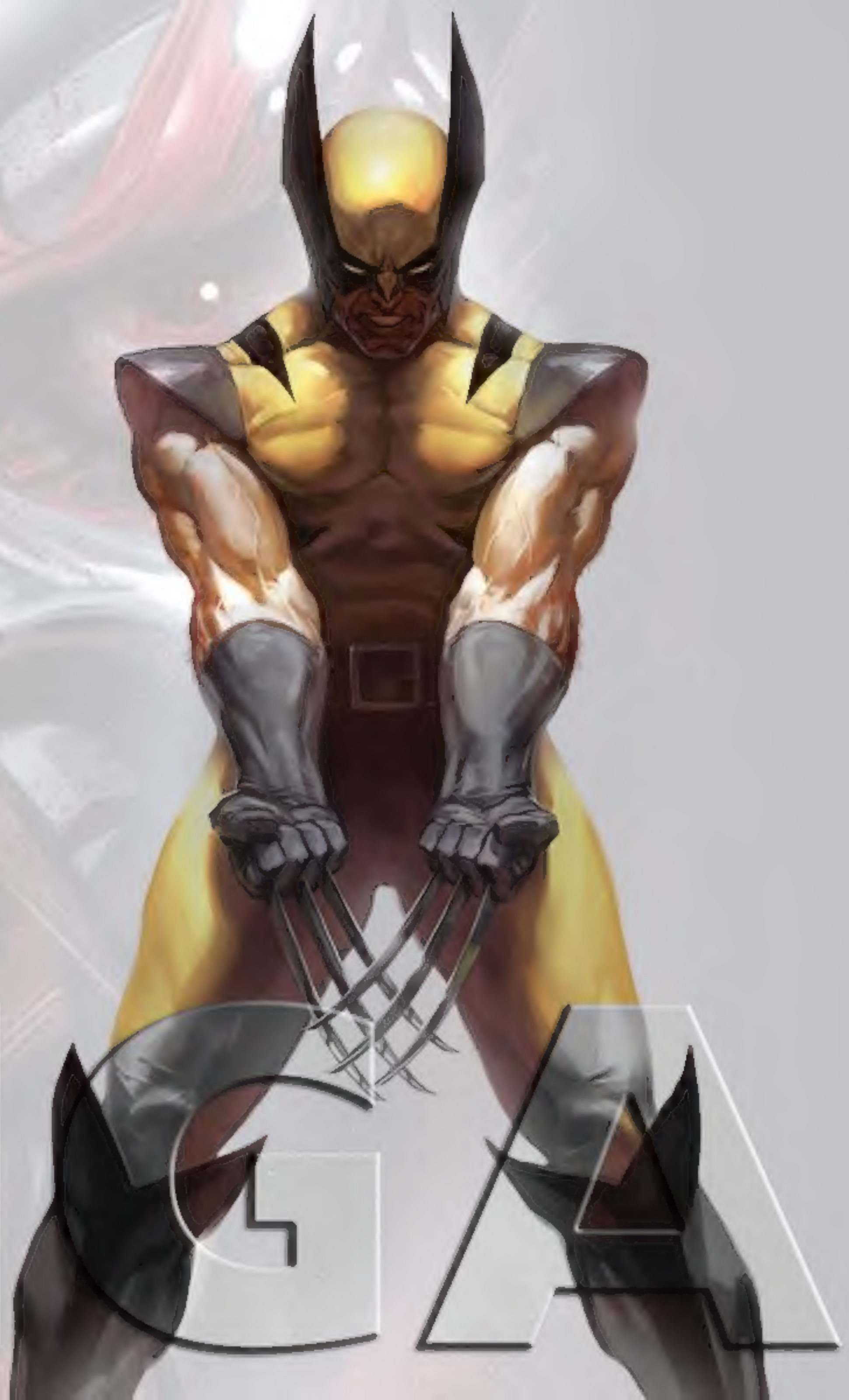


FABLES:
1001 NIGHTS OF SNOWFALL



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